

*The* ARCHITECT *and the*  
BUSINESS *of* BUILDING



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# THE ARCHITECT AND THE BUSINESS OF BUILDING.

## *Architect and Producer*

**T**HE dollar value of all building construction during 1922 is conservatively estimated at \$4,500,000,000. According to prophetic figures published, the total for 1923 will be considerably in excess of this figure. Of the total for 1922, not less than \$3,400,000,000 was executed under the management of architects; and of this amount approximately \$706,000,000 was constructed without the employment of a general contractor. Of the balance of the total, or of \$1,100,000,000, about \$380,000,000 was carried through without either architect or general contractor, and approximately \$720,000,000 was handled by general contractors without an architect.

The 380 millions of work carried through without the service of either architect or general contractor is made up principally of industrial structures, small business buildings, small dwellings and agricultural buildings.

Seventy-two per cent of all buildings handled by architects and costing \$75,000 or more were designed and constructed by members of the American Institute of Architects.

For many manufacturers, especially in connection with new construction, the architectural profession is the most important single market outlet.

The sales pressure at that outlet has been steadily rising with the introduction of new products and expansion in competitive lines. This rising pressure is manifested in the increasing amount of advertising to architects, greater sales activity and mounting selling costs. As the pressure rises the individual manufacturer's selling effort becomes less effective and the waste incident thereto increases.

The causes of this condition are not far to seek or difficult to find. The architectural outlet to the producer's market is restricted by the number of architects and by the individual architect's inability to spread his powers of intelligent discrimination over the countless and growing number of products offered for his consideration. The competitive struggle among producers to get through this outlet, unguided as it is



by any policy or procedure based upon an intelligent understanding of the architect's position or his problem of selection, leads only to confusion. These two conditions which react one upon the other contribute reciprocally to clogging the outlet. The producer's methods of approach and the architect's attempts at discrimination are becoming, as a whole, progressively less successful.

### *The Architect*

The 1920 Census figures show 18,000 persons in the United States who then called themselves architects. There are architectural mailing lists available totaling as high as 12,000. But if only the independent establishments, individual and firm, practicing architecture are counted, the number shrinks to somewhat less than 8000.

Who is the architect? What is his function? Where does he fit in the business of building?

The practice of architecture is a profession.

He who engages in a profession implies thereby that he professes attainments in special knowledge, and that these attainments will be given practical application to the affairs of others, in their interest and for their benefit.

A profession, then, is a service, primarily a personal service, in the performance of which, he who serves assumes toward those served obligations growing out of and consequent upon his claims to special attainments.

The architect's service, the only thing he has to sell, is his professed creative talent in design, his professed knowledge of materials and methods of construction and his professed ability to employ materials and methods safely, wisely and economically in translating design into structure, for and in the interest of his client.

The architect has no personal pecuniary interest in the materials and appliances he employs in the execution of his commissions. He may not speculate with his client's money; neither may he take chances. The architect is a trustee.

Fully to discharge the trust reposed in and accepted by him, the architect ought to know, and in theory, at least, may be expected to know, in addition to the fundamentals of good design, how to predetermine the use performance and measure the suitability of a multitude of products offered for a thousand purposes. Essential as this knowledge is to safe and serviceable construction, it is equally essential to good design, for design must be conceived in terms of materials and their



adaptability. Irrespective of period or style, fundamentally architecture is stone, or brick, or wood, or concrete, or something else.

Fifty short years ago the architect found no great difficulty in mastering a working knowledge of the media of his expression. They were few and their characteristics well tested and definitely established. But conditions have vastly changed. Development and progress in the art and science of construction, the changing order and conditions of life, and invention to satisfy new wants, have made the modern building a complex machine of many parts, not freely fashioned with regard only for its efficient operation but of necessity made to conform to a mould dictated by economic and esthetic requirements. The human mind is no longer capable of acquiring and holding the vast quantity of diverse data and information essential to the wise selection and proper use of those numberless materials and mechanisms out of which buildings are now fabricated.

Under the circumstances, and because of his trusteeship, the architect tends naturally to become cautious and conservative; and, moreover, his caution and conservatism tend to grow as he realizes his increasing inability to gather from his own experience such working knowledge of materials and methods as will equip him to render a service of the highest value.

The architect is becoming more and more dependent upon sources of information other than his own, at best, relatively narrow experience. He is finding it necessary to familiarize himself with the results of scientific research, to resort to standards as criteria by which to judge of fitness. It is perfectly natural for him to turn more and more to the manufacturer in whom he has confidence, for advice on what to use and how to use it. But no matter from what source he secures advice and information he must be convinced that it is dependable, for otherwise he has no assurance that his judgments are sound and his decisions wise. Because of his service obligation he can not act without conviction.

### *The Producer*

There are in the United States some 3500 producers of building materials and equipments, who distribute their products either nationally or semi-nationally. These 3500 producers consistently solicit the patronage of the 8000 architectural establishments.

There are also a large number of small producers, as numerous in total, perhaps, as their larger brothers with national markets, whose distribution is local and who solicit only those architects who practice in their immediate locality.



Solicitation of architects by all of these producers takes the form of direct-by-mail and periodical advertising, and calls by representatives, not to mention the salesmanship which operates through interlocking financial interests.

The number of products thus offered to the architectural profession is almost without limit. If all products performing the same function in the structure, that is to say, all coverings for pitched roofs, for example, and all pipe for water or steam, all materials for finishing woodwork, all cut stone, and so on, are grouped, there are not less than 225 such groups, each highly competitive within itself. And several collections of these groups are also competitive or partially competitive, in a more fundamental sense.

Hence, metaphorically speaking, when the architect steps from the sanctuary of design into the market place to select those things which seem to him best suited to his structural needs, he is at once assailed by a babble of some 4000 voices, each and all claiming the right to recognition. Many, and generally the vast majority, of the products offered, interest him not at all.

This description is a glimpse, merely, of a continuous performance, the expense of which is enormous and growing, and the result relatively small and static.

The architect, it is hoped by producers collectively, will read the equivalent of 74 pages of periodical advertising each working day. That at any rate is what he receives. No one knows how many salesmen enter the architect's office uninvited hoping to get by the outer office gate, but fail. If the architect read all the advertising prepared for him, even if it were all interesting or worth reading, which it is not, and received all the salesmen who called, he would have no reason for reading the one or talking to the other, for he would have no time to devote to the conduct of his own business.

A large percentage of the producer's sales effort is sheer waste. Perforce of circumstances, much of his advertising goes into the waste basket unnoticed. A large quantity of this advertising is valueless, or so ill adapted to its purpose that its value is concealed. Few architects can or will give the time necessary for sifting out of the mass that which is useful.

And salesmen, en bloc, fare no better than their counterpart in type. From the architect's standpoint, salesmen are of three types. It does not follow, of course, that all salesmen are of one or another of these types. The type categories merge and overlap. There are salesmen who cannot be cataloged under any such broad and arbitrary clas-



sification. Nevertheless if the well defined type is selected, he may be described, and the descriptions may be used for the purpose of general classification.

The first type is a salesman only in the last analysis. He is "The Contact Man." He has the entree to architects' offices because, as the result of long acquaintance, the architect has confidence in him. He does not necessarily know any more about his product than does the architect. His prime function is to keep in touch with the work in the architect's office to interpret the architect's requirements to his principal and at the right time offer the services of a company engineer or technician. He is useful to both his principal and the architect.

The second type is the technician or sales engineer, the man who knows his product, its uses and its limitations. He is a competent adviser. His function is of the greatest value, but its value could be greatly enhanced if some means could be found for timing his calls on the architect so as to make them more nearly 100% effective.

And the third type is the salesman who is interested only in "getting the job." His activities are, in part, directed toward getting information that will give him the "edge" on his competitors. He can sell anything. He gets some business, but he adds nothing to the prestige of his employer or to the reputation of his product. He is as willing to waste the architect's time as he is apparently willing to waste his own. It is he and his tactics that have made the name salesman anathema to the architect.

Thus may be outlined with fair accuracy and in broad strokes the factors contributing to waste and dissatisfaction in the business relationship between architects and producers. Correction can be effected only through organized cooperative effort by the two interests directly involved—the architects and the producers.

### ***The American Institute of Architects***

The A.I.A., with more than 2500 members, the only national organization in the architectural profession, became officially cognizant of the condition described, in the Fall of 1921. At Indianapolis, in November of that year, on the initiative of the Board of Directors of the Institute, there was held a joint Conference between architects and producers to consider ways and means of eliminating, or at least progressively reducing, the enormous waste in the architectural profession's business relationship with those who produce the materials which the architect must use as his media in translating design into structure.



It was quickly agreed by the Conference that the subject called for careful study, that the ends in view could not be accomplished over night or by a few meetings. A continuing joint organization was created in which the Institute was represented by its Committee on Structural Service.

### *Committee on Structural Service*

The Committee on Structural Service was created a standing committee by the 52nd (1920) Convention of the A.I.A. The same convention charged the Committee with certain duties which, boiled down, may be stated thus:—

“Raising the standard of service rendered by the architect on the technological side of his practice.”

The means by which the Committee has sought to accomplish this purpose are:

(a) By encouraging and promoting research and standardization which will make possible a progressively more intelligent architectural practice, and by cooperating in such activities with other professional and technical bodies, the Government and industrial and trade associations.

(b) By keeping the architectural profession fully informed on progress and development in the art and science of construction and on structural materials and appliances.

The Committee is performing a twofold function—developing, collecting and transmitting useful data and information, and clearing the channels through which useful data and information, from whatever source, flow to the architect.

Through the Structural Service Committee the Institute is now represented in the National Research Council, Engineering Division; in research activities relating to structural materials and methods conducted by the U. S. Bureau of Standards. The Committee is functioning similarly in cooperation with a number of University and other research laboratories and institutions.

The Committee represents the Institute in the standardization movement, national and international. Through the Committee the Institute is represented in the American Engineering Standards Committee, on a number of the committees of the American Society for Testing Materials, and at the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Standards and Division of Simplified Practice.

Through the Committee again, the Institute is collaborating with a number of producer associations in the standardization of specifications,



and a program is being formulated for similar cooperation with the Architects' Small House Service Bureau of the U. S. in the preparation of standard specifications for the small home.

The Committee reviews and abstracts all current technical literature, reports of independent tests and researches, reports of Government and State Departments and Bureaus, and discussions in the technical periodicals, extracting such information as will be helpful to the architect and aid him in making wise selections and the proper use of materials. All such abstracts are published each month in the Journal of the A.I.A.

The Committee also conducts an information service for architects and others, comprising answers to specific inquiries regarding materials and their uses, structural practices and experience. The answers to such inquiries are compilations of all available authentic information secured from commercially disinterested sources. The Committee itself expresses no opinions.

The Committee has always held the view that the producer is for the architect one of the most important, and in some respects the most important, source of information and data. For some months prior to the November, 1921, Indianapolis Conference the Committee had been studying the possibility of making advertising a more effective vehicle for conveying reliable information from the producer to the architect. It was logical, therefore, that the Institute should turn to the Committee for continuing and developing the work initiated at Indianapolis.

An exhaustive study made by a joint Continuing Committee during the interval between the Indianapolis Conference and the June, 1922, Convention of the Institute resulted in the following resolutions being adopted by the Convention without a dissenting vote:—

That the Structural Service Committee of the American Institute of Architects be authorized to create a Producers Section of the Structural Service Committee as a sustaining body to collaborate in the following duties:—

A. To advise and counsel with manufacturers, who may so desire, on the character of their advertising as to size, form and content.

B. To assist in furthering the use, by architects and producers, of the Standard Construction Classification adopted by the American Institute of Architects.

C. To promote sincerity and reliability of statement in advertising.



### ***Producers Section of the Structural Service Committee***

Immediately following the Convention, a Joint Organizing Committee, consisting of the Structural Service Committee and a number of those producers and representatives of producer associations who had been actively interested, met in New York and adopted the basis of organization for the Producers Section. It was agreed by the meeting that for the first year at least, the Producers Section should be an informal body of individuals representing manufacturers of building materials and appliances and associations of such manufacturers, working with the Structural Service Committee; that the membership dues be \$200 a year, one half to be paid on acceptance of membership and the other half on call of the Executive Committee if and when needed; that the Chairman of the Structural Service Committee be Chairman ex-officio of the Producers Section Executive Committee; and that the Structural Service Committee in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Producers Section prepare budgets, employ the necessary working staff and take such other actions as may be found necessary to accomplish the purposes in view.

Appointment of the Executive Committee of the Producers Section by the Chairman of the Structural Service Committee was merely a device for securing a working committee representative of a body that as yet had no organic existence.

It was also agreed that the service of counseling and advice on advertising by the Structural Service Committee be rendered to members of the Producers Section at cost less 25% and to non-members at cost; that the members be given precedence in receiving service; and that membership dues be credited to members as advance payments on account of any service they may receive.

It was thought desirable for the time being, and until experience proved otherwise, to prohibit statements by a recipient of the service indicating in any way that his publicity had been submitted to the Structural Service Committee for criticism and suggestion or indicating that such publicity was in accord with the Committee's views and recommendations. Formal declaration was also made to the effect that, so far as funds permit, there should be held joint meetings of the Structural Service Committee and the members of the Producers Section.

Thus the Producers Section came into existence.

The Chairman of the Structural Service Committee appointed the following Executive Committee of the Producers Section to act for one year:—



O. C. Harn, National Lead Company.  
T. D'A. Brophy, Anaconda Copper Mining Co.  
F. P. Byington, Johns-Manville, Inc.  
Lyman Clark, General Electric Company.  
A. J. McComb, Otis Elevator Company.  
Ray Young, Stanley Works.  
F. W. Walker, Associated Tile Mfrs.  
C. W. Peelle, The Peelle Company.

The amount of membership dues and the method of payment were fixed because no definite prophecy could be made as to the probable number of members that might be secured within the first year, or as to the budget requirements. The money paid in as dues for the first year it was understood would serve, in a measure, as an underwriting fund. It should be noted that the membership dues are in reality a payment in advance for service to be rendered.

It was clearly understood that Producers Section membership dues would be adjusted in the future with respect to the number of members and budget requirements.

The Executive Committees of the Producers Section and the Structural Service Committee began to function immediately. The first matter on which the Committees acted was advertising, for advertising seemed to be the logical handle by which to first take hold of the large, multiphase and still nebulous program before the group. Consequent upon this decision a statement was prepared and issued which describes the service the Committee is rendering to producers in connection with their advertising to architects. From that statement the following is quoted:—\*

"The purpose for which the Producers Section was created is to provide an agency (The Structural Service Committee) through which manufacturers of materials and devices specified by architects may secure from the architects themselves guidance and advice in regard to the best methods of reaching architects with a view to:

- (a) Making of advertising a medium for conveying to architects authoritative information with respect to the products they must use;
- (b) Reducing the cost of selling to architects;
- (c) Securing, through architects, market recognition of the quality and serviceability of all products; and
- (d) Insuring the proper use of the product."

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\*The full statement will be found at the back of this publication.



The Structural Service Committee will advise with producers in connection with direct-by-mail advertising, periodical advertising and preparation of specifications by producers for the use of architects.

### *The Future*

What may be accomplished by this new mechanism is difficult to predict. There is a unanimity of opinion that the vital and fundamental thing in the whole program is the working contact—contact effected between the architectural profession and producers, for

“CONTACT leads to CONFERENCE,  
CONFERENCE breeds CONFIDENCE, and  
CONFIDENCE expresses itself in COOPERATION.”

With mutual respect and confidence established between architects and producers, any task to which the two address themselves can most certainly be accomplished.

The producers want to know as much about the architect, his problems, his practice and his needs as the architect wants to know about the producer, his policy, his methods, his product and its use. There has been created an instrumentality—The Structural Service Committee—for free intercourse and the exchange of ideas between the architectural profession and the producers of the country, and moreover, for the joint consideration by them of their common problems of production, distribution and utilization.

Some of the problems now in the way of solution are:—

Reduction in the quantity of direct-by-mail advertising to architects.

Making technical advertising intended for preservation by the architect, of such size and character that the architect will file it for reference.

Encouraging architects to adopt the A.I.A. Standard Filing System and producers to index their advertising under the system so that informational advertising and specification data for reference purposes may be so preserved by the architect as always to be readily available.

Giving to periodical advertising proper and effective character.

Developing on the part of the architect an appreciation of good advertising and its value to him not only as a source of information but also as a satisfactory substitute for the wasteful promiscuous calls of salesmen.



Some of the problems pressing for consideration are these:

Economical introduction of new materials and appliances to the architectural profession.

The preparation and maintenance of a reliable mailing list of architects, classified with respect to (a) volume of work, (b) character of work.

Making the salesman persona grata in the architects' offices.

How the producer may know how to time his calls on architects—the establishment of some workable call system.

Discouraging substitutions after the specification is written.

Reform in specification writing with a view to eliminating certain practices which lead to unfair competition.

The further standardization of specifications for specific materials and their application or installation.

Reduction of waste in the distribution of samples.

Plans are under consideration for providing opportunities for joint meetings of architects and producers to discuss such subjects of common interest as sales policies, the initiation of useful standardization, the maintenance of standards of quality, what the producer needs from the architect and what the architect expects of the producer, the development of new products to meet new requirements.

The suggestion has been made and is being considered, that in connection with the Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects there be held an exposition of building materials and equipments, making these conventions the annual occasions on which new materials may be effectively introduced without the present inordinate incident expense, and events from which no architect who wishes to keep himself abreast of the times can afford to absent himself.

### *Accomplishments*

A classification and filing system\* for use in architects' offices has been adopted as standard by the American Institute of Architects.

Two hundred copies of this Standard Classification have been issued to architects upon request. The indications are that the number of architects' offices installing and using this standard system for filing information is growing.

Manufacturers in increasing numbers are printing the official A.I.A. file number on their literature. The applications for assignment of file numbers which are being received indicate that within the year the printing of the file number on advertising literature for architects will be a

\*A.I.A. Standard Document No. 172.



general practice. As this practice grows the value of installing the standard filing system will become increasingly apparent to architects.

The A.I.A. circular of advice on advertising has been completely revised and is now published as Standard Document No. 184.

A number of addresses by representatives of the Structural Service Committee have been made to conventions and sales organizations on the subject of selling to the architect.

Among those organizations who have submitted advertising literature to the Structural Service Committee for criticism and suggestion there may be listed the following: The National Lead Company, The Mitchell Vance Co., Inc.; Jenkins Brothers, Rome Brass and Copper, National Terra Cotta Society, Gardiner & Lewis, Inc.; General Chemical Co., Atlantic Terra Cotta Co., Monarch Metal Products Co., Southern Pine Association, Johns-Manville, Inc.; National Lime Association, Indiana Limestone Quarrymen's Association, Peelle Door Co., Kawneer Co., Sweets Architectural Catalogue, National Lumber Manufacturers Association.

The publications above referred to were submitted either direct by the producer or through an advertising agency.

Among those who have consulted the Committee on general questions of advertising policy the following may be listed: Valentine & Co., Sampson Cordage Works, E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Co., Wm. R. Robinson Co. (advertising agency), Wm. L. Rickard (advertising agency), Berrien Co., Inc. (advertising agency); Frank Presbry Co. (advertising agency), Service Department of Architecture (a publication), The Tuthill Agency, John Lucas, Zinc Institute, Phillip Kobbe (advertising agency).

### ***What the Producers Can Do***

There are three ways in which producers are urged to cooperate with the architects in promoting this highly important program.

By applying to the Committee on Structural Service for the assignment of correct A.I.A. file numbers for their literature intended for architects and print the assigned file number on their publications.

By submitting their publications (in proof or dummy form) intended for architects to the Committee on Structural Service for review and suggestion.

By becoming members of the Producers Section of the Structural Service Committee.



### ***What the Architects Can Do***

There are also three ways in which architects are urged to cooperate with producers in furthering the program.

By installing in their offices the A.I.A. Standard Filing System.

By recommending to producers whose advertising does not accord with the A.I.A. recommendations regarding size, character and content, that consultation with the Structural Service Committee would be helpful reciprocally to the producer and the architect; and also express to producers their appreciation of such advertising as is of reference value.

By submitting their structural problems involving materials and devices and their proper uses to the Structural Service Committee, and also their suggestions for needed standardization and basic data.

#### ***Executive Committee of the Producers Section of the S. S. C.***

O. C. HARN, National Lead Company.

T. D'A. BROPHY, Anaconda Copper Mining Co.

A. J. McCOMB, Otis Elevator Company.

RAY YOUNG, Stanley Works.

F. P. BYINGTON, Johns-Manville, Inc.

LYMAN CLARK, General Electric Company.

F. W. WALKER, Associated Tile Mfrs.

C. W. PEELLE, The Peelle Company.

#### ***Executive Committee of the Structural Service Committee***

S. F. VOORHEES

F. S. BENEDICT

F. Y. JOANNES

L. E. KERN

S. W. JONES



# Service the Structural Service Committee Is Rendering to Producers in Connection with Advertising

Reprint of Bulletin Issued December, 1922,  
by the Producers Section

THE Producers Section of the Structural Service Committee of the American Institute of Architects is the outcome of an effort to eliminate waste—waste of time on the part of architects and of money and time on the part of manufacturers—in the business relationship of manufacturers to architects.

The purpose for which the Producers Section was created is to provide an agency (The Structural Service Committee) through which manufacturers of materials and devices specified by architects may secure from the architects themselves guidance and advice in regard to the best methods of reaching architects with a view to:

- (a) Making of advertising a medium for conveying to architects authoritative information with respect to the products they must use;
- (b) Reducing the cost of selling to architects;
- (c) Securing, through architects, market recognition of the quality and serviceability of all products; and
- (d) Insuring the proper use of the product.

Architects are willing to give this aid to the producers because of the resulting economies and reciprocal advantages to all concerned.

To accomplish this common object, machinery created jointly by the producers and architects, and controlled by the American Institute of Architects has been established to render at cost to those producers who wish it, the following service:

Review contemplated advertising and sales data intended to interest architects and express considered opinions as to the probable effectiveness and value of such material.

These opinions will cover the following questions:

## In Connection with the Presentation of Printed Information (Advertising)

### 1. Substance of the Message

Does the document present the facts which architects are likely to demand?

Has a diagram or tabulation been omitted which would help; or has one been included which means nothing?

Is an example of the use of a material, or testimonial or report of test badly selected?

Has a vital question sure to arise in the architect's mind remained unanswered?

Has a claim been made which is likely to leave a bad impression?

Has a claim been made that is worthless without supporting evidence?

### 2. Expression

Are the literary style and terminology employed appropriate to the subject and the audience?

Is the statement clear?

Is it general when it should be specific, or vice versa?

Is it flippant when it should be serious?

Are the thoughts expressed likely to arouse architects' hostility because they imply the assumption of unjustified knowledge or authority?

Does it indicate a knowledge of the architect's fiduciary relation to the client?

### 3. Appearance

Is the periodical advertising or piece of printed matter attractive enough, measured by architects' standards, to capture their attention and obtain a reading?

Does a pictorial illustration offend good taste?

Has the printed matter color when it should not have?

Is it elaborate and garish when it should be simple and businesslike?

Does it convey the idea of cheapness when it should suggest quiet elegance?

### 4. Size and Form

Is the size convenient to handle and file?

Is it correctly indexed for filing under the A. I. A. Standard Classification?

Is the form suitable to architects' needs?

Is the paper or cover too bulky to be retained in a crowded file?

Is the arrangement of information such as to facilitate reference and ready comprehension by architects?

## In Connection with Verbal Presentation of Information (Personal Salesmanship)

1. What does the architect want from a salesman?

2. What type of man is most likely to be *persona grata* in architects' offices?

3. Is there any time more convenient than another for salesmen to call?

With the aid of the members of the Producers Section the American Institute of Architects has provided a place where a manufacturer may go to secure, not an individual architect's opinion, but a collective architectural opinion as to the probable effectiveness of a proposed publication or sales policy intended to interest architects.

Manufacturers who wish to aid architects in making intelligent selection and use of products and in reducing the cost of finding a market through the architectural profession are urged to lend their support to this program by becoming members of the Producers Section.







